



UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

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First Named Inventor or Application Identifier

YASUO SUDA

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APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☐ Fee Transmittal Form
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☒ Specification Total Pages
3. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) Total Sheets
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration Total Pages
- a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
- b. ☒ Unexecuted for information purposes
- c. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
[Note Box 5 below]
- i. ☐ **DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)**
Signed Statement attached deleting inventor(s)
named in the prior application, see 37 CFR
1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference (useable if Box 4c is checked)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the
oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4c, is considered as being
part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby
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6. ☐ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
7. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)
- a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
- b. ☐ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
- c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

8. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee) ☐ Power of Attorney
10. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
14. ☐ Small Entity Statement(s) ☐ Statement filed in prior application
Status still proper and desired
15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
(if foreign priority is claimed)
16. ☐ Other: _____

17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No. _____

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CLAIMS	(1) FOR	(2) NUMBER FILED	(3) NUMBER EXTRA	(4) RATE	(5) CALCULATIONS
	TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(c))	18-20 =	0	X \$ 18.00 =	\$ 00.00
	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 cfr 1.16(b))	1-3 =	0	X \$ 78.00 =	\$ 00.00
	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS (if applicable) (37 CFR 1.16(d))			\$ 260.00 =	\$ 00.00
				BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a))	\$690.00
				Total of above Calculations = \$690.00	
	Reduction by 50% for filing by small entity (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).				
	TOTAL = \$690.00				

19. Small entity status

- a. ☐ A Small entity statement is enclosed
- b. ☐ A small entity statement was filed in the prior nonprovisional application and such status is still proper and desired.
- c. ☐ Is no longer claimed.

20. ☒ A check in the amount of \$ 690.00 to cover the filing fee is enclosed.21. ☐ A check in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the recordal fee is enclosed.

22. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit overpayments or charge the following fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1205:

- a. ☒ Fees required under 37 CFR 1.16.
- b. ☐ Fees required under 37 CFR 1.17.
- c. ☐ Fees required under 37 CFR 1.18.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, ATTORNEY, OR AGENT REQUIRED

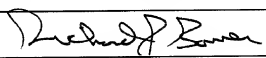
NAME	Richard P. Bauer - Reg. No. 31,588
SIGNATURE	
DATE	June 28, 2000

IMAGE PICKUP APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to an image pickup apparatus capable of picking up a dynamic image or a still image such as a video camera.

Related Background Art

10 In a digital color camera, in response to pressing down of a RELEASE button, an object image is exposed to a solid-state image pickup element such as a CCD or a CMOS sensor for a desired time period, an image signal thus obtained is converted into a digital signal, and then, is subject to predetermined processing such as
15 the YC processing, and an image signal of a predetermined format are obtained. This digital image signal is recorded in a semiconductor memory. The recorded image signal can be read according to the need to be reproduced as a signal capable of being displayed
20 or printed, and can be outputted to a monitor or the like to visualize the recorded image.

 As the method of exposing an object image, three methods are known. One is a method in which RGB color filters are formed on a solid-state image pickup
25 element, for example, on 2×2 pixel basis to give wavelength selectability to each of the pixels, thus separating the object image into RGB images. Another

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is a method in which a solid-state image pickup element does not have the wavelength selectability, optical filter having the wavelength selectability are inserted in an image pickup optical system, and time-sequential
5 switching of the optical filter is carried out. The other is a method in which a color separation optical system is added at the back of the image pickup optical system to take in images using different image pickup elements with regard to the respective wavelength
10 ranges.

A conventional digital color camera often adopts the first method described in the above. Japanese Patent Application Laid-open No. 9-172649 discloses the third method described in the above, while Japanese
15 Patent Application Laid-open Nos. 7-84177 and 7-123418 disclose the second method described in the above.

However, in all the three methods described in the above, since the image pickup optical system is shared by all the wavelength ranges, it is necessary to have
20 satisfactory optical performance over the whole visible range. Generally, since an image pickup optical system uses light refraction in optical glass or in optical transparent resin as its imaging principle, the index of refraction changes according to the wavelength, and,
25 in order to prevent the image quality from being degraded due to such the change, an optical design method referred to as achromatism is used. As a

result, it is difficult to form a high performance image pickup optical system of a simple lens. This is an obstacle to miniaturization of the image pickup optical system.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided an image pickup apparatus comprising first and second image pickup portions for receiving at least a first wavelength component of object light and a second wavelength component of the object light different from the first wavelength component, respectively, and first and second optical systems for guiding the first and second wavelength components of the object light to be received by the first and second image pickup portions to the first and second image pickup portions, respectively, via different optical paths, the first and second optical systems being constructed such that focal length of the first optical system with regard to the first wavelength component is equal to the focal length of the second optical system with regard to the second wavelength component. The present invention can attain an image pickup apparatus which is small-sized and has high image quality.

Other aspects of the present invention will become apparent from the following preferable specific embodiment.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a sectional view of an image pickup system of a digital color camera according to an embodiment of the present invention;

5 Fig. 2 is a front view of a solid-state image pickup element of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a front view of a diaphragm of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

10 Fig. 4 illustrates the ranges where optical filters of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1 are formed;

15 Fig. 5 illustrates an objective lens of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1 which is viewed from the side where light is projected;

Fig. 6 is a graph showing the spectral transmission factor characteristics of the optical filters of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

20 Fig. 7 is a graph showing the spectral transmission factor characteristics of a color purity correction filter of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

25 Fig. 8 is a graph showing the spectral transmission factor characteristics of a photochromic glass of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 9 is a graph showing the transmission factor distribution of a transmission factor distribution type

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filter of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 10 is a graph showing the OTF characteristics of the objective lens of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

5 Fig. 11 is a graph showing the intensity distribution in an image by the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 12 is an explanatory view for explaining the setting of the intervals between lens portions of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

10 Fig. 13 is an explanatory view for explaining the positions of images of an object at infinity of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 14 is a block diagram of a signal processing system of the digital color camera shown in Fig. 1;

15 Fig. 15 illustrates the positional relationship of the image pickup region for R and B pixels with respect to the image pickup region for a G pixel of the image pickup system shown in Fig. 1;

20 Fig. 16 is an explanatory view of interpolation processing of the digital color camera shown in Fig. 1; and

Figs. 17A, 17B, and 17C illustrate the overall structure of the digital color camera shown in Fig. 1.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention are

now described in detail with reference to the drawings.

Figs. 17A, 17B, and 17C illustrate the overall structure of a digital color camera according to a first embodiment of the present invention. Figs. 17A, 5 17C, and 17B are a front view, a rear view, and a sectional view taken along the line 17B-17B in the rear view of Fig. 17C, respectively.

In Figs. 17A, 17B, and 17C, reference numeral 1 denotes a camera body. An illuminating light intake 10 window 2 formed of a white diffusing plate is positioned at the back of a color liquid crystal monitor 4. Reference numerals 5 and 6 denote a main switch and a RELEASE button, respectively. Reference numerals 7, 8, and 9 are switches for a user to set the 15 state of the camera. In particular, the reference numeral 9 denotes a PLAY button. A reference numeral 13 denotes a display of the remaining number of recordable pictures. Object light which is incident into a prism 12 from a viewfinder front frame 3 is 20 projected from a viewfinder eyepiece window 11. Reference numerals 10 and 14 denote an image pickup system and a connection terminal for connecting to an external computer or the like to transmit and receive data, respectively.

25 The schematic structure of a signal processing system is now described. Fig. 14 is a block diagram of the signal processing system. This camera is a single

plate type digital color camera using a solid-state image pickup element 120 such as a CCD or a CMOS sensor. Image signals representing a dynamic image or a still image are obtained by driving the solid-state image pickup element 120 continuously or only once. Here, the solid-state image pickup element 120 is an image pickup device of the type which converts exposed light into electric signals with regard to the respective pixels, stores respective charges according to the light amount, and reads the respective charges.

It is to be noted that Fig. 14 only shows portions which are directly relevant to the present invention, and illustration and description of portions which are not directly relevant to the present invention are omitted.

As shown in Fig. 14, the image pickup apparatus has the image pickup system 10, an image processing system 20 as an image processing means, a recording and reproduction system 30, and a control system 40.

Further, the image pickup system 10 includes therein an objective lens 100, a diaphragm 110, and the solid-state image pickup element 120, the image processing system 20 includes therein an A/D converter 500, an RGB image processing circuit 210, and a YC processing circuit 230, the recording and reproduction system 30 includes therein a recording processing circuit 300 and a reproduction processing circuit 310, and the control

system 40 includes therein a system control unit 400, an operation detection circuit 410, and a drive circuit 420 of the solid-state image pickup element.

The image pickup system 10 is an optical
5 processing system for imaging light incident from an object through the diaphragm 110 and the objective lens 100, on an image pickup plane of the solid-state image pickup element. The light transmission factor of the objective lens 100 is adjusted to expose a subject
10 image of an appropriate light amount to the solid-state image pickup element 120. As described in the above, as the solid-state image pickup element 120, an image pickup device such as a CCD and a CMOS sensor is applied. By controlling the exposure time and the
15 exposure intervals of the solid-state image pickup element 120, image signals representing continuous dynamic images or image signals representing a still image by one exposure can be obtained.

Fig. 1 is a detailed view of the image pickup
20 system 10. First, the diaphragm 110 has three circular openings 110a, 110b, and 110c as shown in Fig. 3. Object light which enters a light incidence plane 100e of the objective lens 100 from the openings are projected from three lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c
25 of the objective lens 100 to form three object images on the image pickup plane of the solid-state image pickup element 120. The diaphragm 110, the light

incidence plane 100e, and the image pickup plane of the solid-state image pickup element 120 are in parallel with one another. In this way, by making weak the power on the incidence side, making strong the power on the projection side, and providing a diaphragm on the incidence side, the curvature of the image plane can be made less. It is to be noted that, though the light incidence plane 100e of the objective lens 100 is a plane here, the light incidence plane 100e may be formed of three spherical surfaces or three rotation-symmetry nonspherical surfaces.

The three lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c have circular spherical surface portions as shown in Fig. 5 showing the objective lens 100 viewed from the side where light is projected. An infrared radiation cutting filter having a low transmission factor with regard to the wavelength range of 670 nm and more is formed on the spherical surface portions while a light shielding layer is formed on a plane portion 100d shown with hatching. More specifically, the objective optical system is formed with the objective lens 100 and the diaphragm 110, while the three lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c are the imaging system.

In the present embodiment, the first image pickup region according to the present invention corresponds to an image pickup region 120a while the second image pickup region according to the present invention

corresponds to an image pickup region 120b or 120c. The first imaging system corresponds to the lens portion 100a while the second imaging system corresponds to the lens portion 100b or 100c. Further, the first object image corresponds to an object image formed within an image circle 51a while the second object image corresponds to an object image formed within an image circle 51b or 51c. The first image signal corresponds to a G image signal while the second image signal corresponds to an R image signal or a B image signal.

The manufacturing is easy with using glass molding in case the objective lens 100 is made of glass and with using injection molding in case the objective lens 100 is made of resin.

Fig. 2 is a front view of the solid-state image pickup element 120. The solid-state image pickup element 120 is provided with three image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c corresponding to the formed three object images. Each of the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c are sized to be 2.24 mm \times 1.68 mm with the arrangement of 800 \times 600 pixels having the vertical and horizontal pitch of 2.8 μ m. The size of the whole image pickup regions is 2.24 mm \times 5.04 mm. The diagonal size of each of the image pickup regions is 2.80 mm. In the figure, image circles 51a, 51b, and 51c within which an object image is formed are

circular, the sizes of which circles are determined by the size of the openings of the diaphragm and the spherical surface portions on the projection side of the objective lens 100. The image circles 51a and 51b
5 overlap each other and the image circles 51b and 51c overlap each other.

In Fig. 1, hatched portions 52a, 52b, and 52c sandwiched between the diaphragm 110 and the objective lens 100 are optical filters formed on the light
10 incidence plane 100e of the objective lens 100. As shown in Fig. 4 showing the objective lens 100 viewed from the light incidence side, the optical filters 52a, 52b, and 52c are formed in regions which completely include the diaphragm openings 110a, 110b, and 110c,
15 respectively.

The optical filter 52a has spectral transmission factor characteristics shown as G in Fig. 6 which mainly transmit green, the optical filter 52b has spectral transmission factor characteristics shown as R
20 which mainly transmit red, and the optical filter 52c has spectral transmission factor characteristics shown as B which mainly transmit blue, and thus, these are primary color filters. As the product with the characteristics of the infrared radiation cutting
25 filter formed on the lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c, the object images formed in the image circles 51a, 51b, and 51c are of green light component, red

light component, and blue light component, respectively.

On the other hand, optical filters 53a, 53b, and 53c are formed on the three image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c, respectively, of the solid-state image pickup element 120. Their spectral transmission factor characteristics are equivalent to the ones shown in Fig. 6. More specifically, the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c are sensitive to green light (G), red light (R), and blue light (B), respectively.

Since the spectral distributions of the received light of the respective image pickup regions are given as the product of the spectral transmission factors of the pupils and the spectral transmission factors of the image pickup regions, respectively, the combination of the pupil and the image pickup region is selected according to the wavelength range. More specifically, object light which goes through the diaphragm opening 110a is mainly photoelectrically converted in the image pickup region 120a, object light which goes through the diaphragm opening 110b is mainly photoelectrically converted in the image pickup region 120b, and object light which goes through the diaphragm opening 110c is mainly photoelectrically converted in the image pickup region 120c. In other words, the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c output a G image, an R image, and a B image, respectively. In this way, by using

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multiple optical filters for the purpose of color separation on the pupils of the image pickup optical system and on the image pickup element, the color purity can be enhanced. This is because, by using the same kind of optical filters twice, the buildup of the transmission factor characteristics becomes steeper and the red color (R) and the blue color (B) do not overlap each other. It is to be noted that the transmission factors of the optical filters 52a, 52b, and 52c or of the optical filters 53a, 53b, and 53c are preferably set so as to provide appropriate signal levels in the respective image pickup regions in the same accumulation time.

In the image processing system 20, a color image is formed based on the selective photoelectric conversion output obtained from the plurality of images by the plurality of image pickup regions of the solid-state image pickup element 120, respectively. Here, since the peak wavelength of the spectral luminous efficiency is 555 nm, the signal processing is carried out using a G image signal including this wavelength, as the reference image signal.

When the pixel pitch of the solid-state image pickup element is fixed, compared with a system adopted generally by a digital color camera in which an RGB color filter is formed on the solid-state image pickup element with, for example, 2×2 pixel block basis to

provide wavelength selectability to each pixel, and thus, an object image is separated into RGB images, the size of the object image is $1/\sqrt{3}$ times, and thus, the focal length of the objective lens is about $1/\sqrt{3}$ times, which is quite advantageous in thinning the camera.

It is to be noted that, with regard to the spectral transmission factor characteristics of the optical filters 52a, 52b, and 52c and of the optical filters 53a, 53b, and 53c, as shown in Fig. 6, R and G overlap each other and G and B overlap each other, though R and B are almost separated from each other.

Therefore, even when the image circle 51b of the red light overlaps the image pickup region 120c for photoelectrically converting the blue light, and conversely, even when the image circle 51c of the blue light overlaps the image pickup region 120b for photoelectrically converting the red light, these images do not become the output of the image pickup regions. However, at the portion where the image circle 51b of the red light overlaps the image pickup region 120a for photoelectrically converting the green light and at the portion where the image circle 51a of the green light overlaps the image pickup region 120b for photoelectrically converting the red light, a small amount of an image of a different wavelength which should be blocked is superimposed. More specifically, since the selectivity of the object image is given by

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parts of the base material of the objective lens 100.

As shown in Fig. 7, the color purity correction filter has characteristics to selectively absorb light in a predetermined wavelength range between the peak wavelengths of the color components of R, G, and B to decrease the amount of transmission thereof. This action almost eliminates cross talk due to the overlap of the image circle 51b of the red light and the image pickup region 120a for photoelectrically converting the green light and the overlap of the image circle 51a of the green light and the image pickup region 120b for photoelectrically converting the red light.

Further, the objective lens 100 is also provided with photochromic characteristics which is a phenomenon to be darkened by light and to be reversibly achromatized when the irradiation of light is stopped. This is for, since the accumulation time control range of the solid-state image pickup element 120 is limited, suppressing the amount of light reaching the solid-state image pickup element when the field is extremely bright, thereby enlarging the recordable intensity range.

As the photochromic glass, for example, photochromic glass of phosphate glass made by Chance-Pilkington which has been put to practical use for spectacles (Product name: Reactolite Rapide) may be used.

Fig. 8 is a graph showing the spectral transmission factor characteristics of a photochromic glass used as the objective lens 100. In Fig. 8, a solid line shows the characteristics after exposure to sunlight for 20 minutes while a broken line shows the characteristics with no exposure to sunlight. When the camera is carried about with the user outdoors under a blue sky or the like, light beams which enter the objective lens 100 from the diaphragm 110 makes the objective lens 100 itself darkened to suppress the amount of light entering the solid-state image pickup element 120 to be about $1/2$. As a result, the accumulation time can be made twice as long, which raises the control limitation on the high intensity side.

The screen size of each of the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c is $2.24 \text{ mm} \times 1.68 \text{ mm}$ as described in the above, since the pixel pitch is $2.8 \text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and the number of the pixels are 800×600 . The diagonal screen size of each of the image pickup regions is 2.80 mm . Generally, when the image pickup angle θ of a small-sized camera is about 70° in the diagonal direction, the camera is most convenient. When the image pickup angle is 70° , the focal length is 2.0 mm in this case, since it is determined by the diagonal size of the screen.

When a person or the like is the subject of

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recording, considering that a person is about 170 cm tall and one person to three people are often recorded at a time, a virtual distance D to the subject [m] can be defined as in the following equation (1) as a

5 function of the image pickup angle $\theta[^\circ]$:

$$D = 1.4 / \tan (\theta/2) \quad \dots (1)$$

Substituting 70° for θ of equation (1), $D = 2.0$ m is obtained. Here, if the image pickup system 10 is formed so as to focus on the subject best when the distance to the subject is 2 m, the letting out of the lens from the point at infinity is 0.002 mm. Taking into consideration the allowable circle of confusion to be described later, there causes practically no problem even if the image pickup system is a fixed focus image pickup optical system without a mechanism for letting the lens out.

A focal length f of a planoconvex lens put in the air can be represented as follows:

$$f = \{1 / (1-n)\} r \quad \dots (2)$$

20 wherein n is the index of refraction and r is the radius of the spherical surface. Therefore, if the index of refraction n of the objective lens 100 is 1.5, for example, r for obtaining the focal length of 2.0 mm is 1.0 mm.

25 It is convenient to make equal the sizes of the red, green, and blue object images, since there is no need to make correction of the image magnification, and

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In case of glass with the index of refraction of the d line (587.6 nm) $n_d = 1.5$ and the Abbe number $v_d = 60$, the indexes of refraction at the wavelengths of 530 nm, 620 nm, and 450 nm are about 1.503, 1.499, and 1.509, respectively. If all the radii r of the spherical surfaces of the lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c equal -1.0 mm, the focal lengths at the respective wavelengths are, by the equation (2), as follows:

20 the lens portion 100b having the representative
wavelength of 620 nm : 2.004 nm, and

Suppose from the pixel pitch that the allowable
25 circle of confusion is $3.0\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and further suppose that
the f-number of the objective lens is F5.6, the depth
of focus represented as the product of the two is 16.8

µm. It can be seen that the difference 0.039 mm between the focal length in case of 620 nm and the focal length in case of 450 nm already exceeds this. More specifically, though the paraxial image magnifications are the same, depending on the color of the subject, the subject may be out of focus. Since the spectral transmission factor of an object normally ranges over a wide wavelength range, it is quite rare that a sharp image in focus can be obtained.

Accordingly, the radii r of the spherical surfaces of the lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c are optimized with regard to the respective representative wavelengths. More specifically, here, no achromatism for removing the chromatic aberration over the whole visible region is not carried out and designs for the wavelengths are applied to the respective lenses. First, the equation (2) is transformed to obtain the following equation (3):

$$r = (1-n) f \quad \dots (3)$$

Inserting $f = 2.0$ and inserting in sequence $n = 1.503$, $n = 1.499$, and $n = 1.509$ in the equation (3), the following respective radii are calculated:

the lens portion 100a having the representative wavelength of 530 nm : $r = -1.006$ mm,

the lens portion 100b having the representative wavelength of 620 nm : $r = -0.998$ mm, and

the lens portion 100c having the representative

wavelength of 450 nm : $r = -1.018$ mm.

In order to make well-balanced the difference in the image magnifications at a high position of an image, the heights of the vertices of the lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c are slightly adjusted, and then, both the sharpness and the image magnification are ideal. Further, non-spherical surfaces are used for the respective lens portions to satisfactorily correct the curvature of the image plane. With regard to the distortion of the image, it can be corrected in the signal processing to be carried out later.

In this way, when reference G image signals by the green object light including the wavelength of 555 nm which has the highest luminosity factor and image signals by the red and blue object lights, respectively, are obtained, and different focal lengths are set (the lens portions 100a to 100c are set at different focal length with regard to light other than the spectral distributions having the above representative wavelengths) with regard to one wavelength (for example, green of the wavelength of 555 nm having the highest luminosity factor) and a substantially equal focal length is set with regard to the representative wavelengths in the respective spectral distribution in the imaging system, then by compositing these image signals, a color image with satisfactory correction of the chromatic aberration can

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be obtained. Since each of the imaging systems is formed of one lens, there can be also attained technological advantage of thinning the imaging system. Further, though achromatism normally requires a combination of two lenses having different dispersions, the achromatism is carried out here by only one lens, and thus, there can be also attained technological advantage of lowering the cost.

The objective lens 100 is required to have high contrast image dissection up to the spatial frequency range as high as the pixel pitch. The image pickup system 10 takes in three object images with regard to the three wavelength ranges, and thus, compared with an image pickup system provided with a mosaic optical filter such as of the Baiyer arrangement having the same number of pixels, as described in the above, the focal length is about $1/\sqrt{3}$ times to attain the same image pickup angle. Therefore, it is necessary to materialize high contrast image dissection of higher spatial frequency component. The optimization with regard to the respective wavelengths of the lens portions described in the above is a technology for suppressing the chromatic aberration for the purpose of materializing this.

Generally, there are two methods of improving the aberration characteristics of an image pickup optical system to make spurious resolution less liable to

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occurrence of spurious resolution. This corresponds to an actual state where reversal of negative/positive occurs, that is, a portion which should be white is black while a portion which should be black is white.

- 5 It makes it clear that a natural image can be obtained by making narrower the imaging light beam.

However, when the imaging light beam is extremely narrowed, the contrast in a high frequency range is decreased due to diffraction of light. In this state, an image is formed of a bright spot at the center and diffraction stripes surrounding the bright spot. These are caused by, as known well, relative increase in the intensity of the diffraction stripes due to peripheral waves generated on the periphery of the opening of the diaphragm.

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The diffraction stripes can be decreased by adding to the objective lens a filter which is transparent at the center and becomes darker toward the periphery. This method is referred to as apodization, which is described in detail on pages 172 to 174 of "Kogaku Gijutsu Handbook Zohoban (Handbook of Optical Technology, Enlarged Edition)" (1975, Asakura Shoten).

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Fig. 9 is a graph showing the transmission factor distribution of transmission factor distribution type filters provided on the light incidence plane 100e of the objective lens 100 so as to face the diaphragm openings 110a, 110b, and 110c. The transmission factor

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distribution type filters are denoted as 54a, 54b, and 54c in Fig. 1. The positions where the transmission factor is the highest correspond to the centers of the diaphragm openings 110a, 110b, and 110c while the positions where the transmission factor is zero correspond to the periphery of the openings 110a, 110b, and 110c, respectively, of the diaphragm. In other words, the transmission factor is distributed so as to be the highest at the centers of the diaphragm openings and so as to monotonically decrease toward the periphery.

Such a transmission factor distribution type filter is formed by forming a thin film of Inconel, Chromel, chromium or the like by vapor deposition or sputtering on the light incidence side of the objective lens 100. The characteristics shown in Fig. 9 can be obtained by making the thin film the thinnest at the center and the thickest on the periphery. It is to be noted that, in forming such a thin film, the position of a mask used in the vapor deposition or sputtering is continuously controlled.

Though the transmission factor distribution type filters 54a, 54b, and 54c are formed on the objective lens here, the structure may be that they are formed on a glass plate and are arranged on the light incidence side or the light projection side of the objective lens 100.

Fig. 11 is a graph showing the intensity distribution in an image. In the figure, a broken line a shows a case where the transmission factor is constant over the whole diaphragm opening, while a solid line b shows a case where the transmission factor is decreased from the center of the diaphragm opening toward the periphery. Compared with the case of the characteristics shown by a, there is no bound on the periphery of the image in the characteristics shown by b, which clearly shows that the image formed is satisfactory. Here, This referects technological advantage of decreasing the diffraction stripes by decreasing peripheral light beams by means of apodization.

Next, the relationship between the objective lens and the image pickup regions is described. Since the image pickup system has three lens portions, the positions of the three object images relatively change according to the distance to the subject. As described in the above, each of the image pickup regions is sized to be 2.24 mm x 1.68 mm, and the image pickup regions are arranged adjacent to each other with their long sides being in contact with each other. Therefore, the center to center distance of adjoining image pickup regions is 1.68 mm. In the YC processing circuit 230 to be described later, signal processing is carried out on the assumption that the center of an object image is

the center of the image pickup region. When an object image with the virtual object distance of 2 m is to be formed on the image pickup portion at the same intervals as that distance, as shown in Fig. 12, the interval between the lens portions 100a and 100b and between the lens portions 100b and 100c is set to be 1.6783 mm. In the figure, arrows 55a, 55b, and 55c denote imaging systems having positive power by the three lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c of the objective lens 100, respectively, rectangles 56a, 56b, and 56c denote the ranges of the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c, respectively, and L1, L2, and L3 are optical axes of the imaging systems 55a, 55b, and 55c, respectively. Since the light incidence surface of the objective lens 100 is a plane and the lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c to be the light projection surface are spherical surfaces, perpendiculars from the respective centers of the spheres to the light incidence plane 100e are the optical axes.

Here, as shown in Fig. 13, images of an object at infinity are formed at the same intervals as that of the lens portions 100a, 100b, and 100c, and thus, the interval between the G object image and the R object image and the interval between the R object image and the B object image are 1.6783 mm, which is a little smaller than the center-to-center distance of the image

pickup regions of 1.68 mm. The difference ΔY is 0.0017 mm, i.e., 1.7 μm . With the G object image which has the highest luminosity factor being as the reference object image, when the B object image moves, the
5 difference ΔY is doubled and is 3.4 μm . Since it is often the case that a short-range object such as a person is positioned in the middle of a picture to be picked up and that a long-range object is positioned on the periphery of the picture, and, since the aberration
10 of the objective lens increases on the periphery of the picture to lower the quality of an image, it can be understood that there is practically no problem if the maximum image interval change is smaller than the pixel pitch multiplied by two. As described in the above,
15 since the pixel pitch P of the solid-state image pickup element 120 is 2.8 μm , it follows that $\Delta Y < 2 \times P$, and thus, the color misalignment in an image at infinity to this extent is allowable.

Further, the interval between the images varies
20 also according to temperature change of the image pickup system 10. Since the imaging magnification of the image pickup system 10 is extremely small, the image interval variation ΔZ can be expressed as the difference between the expansion of the objective lens
25 and the expansion of the solid-state image pickup element in the following equation (4):

$$Z = 1.68 \times (\alpha L - \alpha S) \times \Delta T \quad \dots (4)$$

Here, when $\alpha S = 0.26 \times 10^{-5}$, $\Delta T = 20[^\circ\text{C}]$, and the objective lens 100 is formed of low-melting glass and $\alpha_L = 1.2 \times 10^{-5}$, ΔZ is calculated at 0.00032 [mm]. This is the variation in the interval between the G object image and the R object image and the variation in the interval between the R object image and the B object image.

$$2 \times A \times (\alpha L - 0.26 \times 10^{-5}) \times 20 < 1/2 P \quad \dots (5)$$

wherein A is either the interval between the G image

$$2 \times A \times (\alpha L - 0.26 \times 10^{-5}) \times 20 < 1/2 P \quad \dots (5)$$

and the R image or the interval between the R image and the B image and P is the pixel pitch.

Since the coefficient αL ($= 1.2 \times 10^{-5}$) of linear expansion of the objective lens 100 used in the above
5 satisfies the relationship expressed by the expression (5), it can be understood that the material of the lens 100 is suitable for the camera.

Further, apart from the fluctuation of the image interval due to the distance to the object and due to
10 temperature change, a method referred to as pixel shift is used where, by shifting relatively the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c of the solid-state image pickup element by 1/2 pixel, the resolution is made
higher with a small number of pixels. The amount of
15 the shift of 1/2 pixel is set with regard to the virtual object distance of 2 m.

As shown in Fig. 15, the image pickup region 120b for outputting the R image signals and the image pickup region 120c for outputting the B image signals are
20 arranged so as to be shifted by 1/2 pixel both in the horizontal direction and in the vertical direction with respect to the image pickup region 120a for outputting the G image signals.

This pixel shift may be materialized by making the
25 lens portions 100b and 100c of the objective lens 100 slightly offset with respect to the lens portion 100a, or may be materialized by making the image pickup

regions 120b and 120c of the solid-state image pickup element 120 slightly offset with respect to the image pickup region 120a.

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In an optical filter arrangement such as the
5 Baiyer arrangement, since, for example, a pixel
provided with a red optical filter or a pixel provided
with a blue optical filter is arranged between pixels
provided with a green optical filter, an optical low-
pass filter for suppressing aliasing is necessary.
10 However, in case of that images having different
spectral distributions are taken in with regard to
different image pickup regions, pixels provided with
the respective optical filters can be densely arranged,
and, as a result, the influence of the aliasing is
15 small, and thus, a high definition image can be
obtained without the need for the optical low-pass
filter. This makes it possible to miniaturize the
image pickup system and to substantially lower the
cost.

20 Next, the signal processing is described.

As described in the above, an image pickup device
having 1,800 pixels in its lengthwise direction and 800
pixels in its breadthwise direction, i.e., having
1,440,000 pixels in total is effectively applied to the
25 solid-state image pickup element 120. Optical filters
of the three primary colors, that is, red (R), green
(G), and blue (B), are arranged on its front surface in

As shown in Fig. 14, image signals read from the solid-state image pickup element 120 are supplied to the A/D converter 500 of the image processing system 20. The A/D converter 500 is, for example, a signal converting circuit for converting the signals into digital signals of, for example, ten bits according to the amplitude of the signal of each pixel and for outputting the converted signals. Then, the image signal processing is carried out in digital processing.

The RGB image processing circuit 210 is a signal processing circuit for processing the pixel signals of the 1800 x 800 pixels received from the solid-state image pickup element 120 through the A/D converter 500, and has a white balance circuit, a gamma control circuit, and an interpolation circuit for making the resolution higher by interpolation.

The YC processing circuit 230 is a signal
25 processing circuit for generating a luminance signal Y
and chrominance signals R-Y and B-Y. The YC processing
circuit 230 is formed of a high luminance signal

generating circuit for generating high luminance signal YH, a low luminance signal generating circuit for generating a low luminance signal YL, and a chrominance signal generating circuit for generating chrominance signals R-Y and B-Y. A luminance signal Y is formed by
5 compositing a high luminance signal YH and a low luminance signal YL.

The RGB image processing circuit 210 is now described in detail.

10 RGB signals outputted through the A/D converter 500 with regard to the R, G, and B regions, respectively, are first subject to predetermined white balance adjustment in the white balance circuit in the RGB image processing circuit 210, and then are subject
15 to predetermined gamma control in the gamma control circuit.

The interpolation circuit in the RGB image processing circuit 210 generates by interpolation, image signals having the resolution which is four times
20 as much as that of the 600 x 800 pixels, converts the image signals from the solid-state image pickup element 120 into signals having high definition image quality, and supplies them to the high luminance signal generating circuit, the low luminance signal generating
25 circuit, and the chrominance signal generating circuit at the subsequent stage.

Since the sizes of the R, G, and B object images

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are already the same based on the setting of the objective lens 100, first, by a publicly known method, arithmetic processing for correcting optical aberration of the objective optical system is carried out with regard to the respective image signals. After that, the interpolation processing, the luminance signal processing, and the chrominance signal processing which are the same as those of an ordinary digital color camera are performed. The interpolation processing is as follows.

First, a G image signal which is a reference image signal from the image pickup region 120a is subject to interpolation according to the following equations (6) to (9):

$$G_{2i2j} = G_{ij} \quad \dots (6)$$

$$G_{2i(2j+1)} = G_{ij} \cdot 1/2 + G_{i(j+1)} \cdot 1/2 \quad \dots (7)$$

$$G_{(2i+1)2j} = G_{ij} \cdot 1/2 + G_{(i+1)j} \cdot 1/2 \quad \dots (8)$$

$$G_{(2i+1)(2j+1)} = G_{ij} \cdot 1/4 + G_{i(j+1)} \cdot 1/4 + G_{(i+1)j} \cdot 1/4 + G_{(i+1)(j+1)} \cdot 1/4 \quad \dots (9)$$

This is, 16 G elements are generated from each four G pixels, and thus the G image signals of 600 × 800 pixels from the image pickup region 120a are converted into 1200 × 1600 pixels.

Then, R image signals from the image pickup region 120b corresponding to the respective positions of the G image signals calculated using the above equations (6) to (9) are subject to interpolation according to the

following equations (10) to (13):

$$R_{2i2j} = R_{(i-1)(j-1)} \cdot 1/4 + R_{(i-1)j} \cdot 1/4 + \\ R_{i(j-1)} \cdot 1/4 + R_{ij} \cdot 1/4 \quad \dots (10)$$

$$R_{2i(2j+1)} = R_{(i-1)j} \cdot 1/2 + R_{ij} \cdot 1/2 \quad \dots (11)$$

$$5 \quad R_{(2i+1)2j} = R_{(j-1)} \cdot 1/2 + R_{ij} \cdot 1/2 \quad \dots (12)$$

$$R_{(2i+1)(2j+1)} = R_{ij} \quad \dots (13)$$

Since, as described in the above, the image pickup region of the R object image and the image pickup region of the B object image are arranged so as to be shifted by 1/2 pixel from the image pickup region of the G object image, the original output of the ij address is applied to the (2i+1)(2j+1) address as indicated by the equation (13).

Similarly to the R image signals, B image signals from the image pickup region 120c corresponding to the respective positions of the G image signals calculated using the above equations (6) to (9) are subject to interpolation according to the following equations (14) to (17):

$$20 \quad B_{2i2j} = B_{(i-1)(j-1)} \cdot 1/4 + B_{(i-1)j} \cdot 1/4 + \\ B_{i(j-1)} \cdot 1/4 + B_{ij} \cdot 1/4 \quad \dots (14)$$

$$B_{2i(2j+1)} = B_{(i-1)j} \cdot 1/2 + B_{ij} \cdot 1/2 \quad \dots (15)$$

$$B_{(2i+1)2j} = B_{(j-1)} \cdot 1/2 + B_{ij} \cdot 1/2 \quad \dots (16)$$

$$B_{(2i+1)(2j+1)} = B_{ij} \quad \dots (17)$$

25 By the above processing, the R, G, and B signals of 600 x 800 pixels from the image pickup regions 120a, 120b, and 120c are converted into R, G, and B signals

of 1200 × 1600 pixels having high definition image quality, respectively.

5 The high luminance signal generating circuit in the YC processing circuit 230 is a publicly known signal forming circuit for forming a high luminance signal YH from a color signal having the highest spatial frequency component among color component signals. The low luminance signal generating circuit is a publicly known signal forming circuit for forming
10 luminance signal YL of low frequency from a signal containing all the color components of R, G, and B. The chrominance signal generating circuit is a publicly known arithmetic circuit for calculating chrominance signals R-Y and B-Y from highly definition RGB signals.

15 The recording and reproduction system 30 is a processing system for outputting image signals to the memory and outputting image signals to the liquid crystal monitor 4, and includes a recording processing circuit 300 for writing and reading image signals in
20 and from the memory and a reproduction processing circuit 310 for reproducing image signals read from the memory as output to the monitor. More specifically, the recording processing circuit 300 includes a
25 compressing and expanding circuit for compressing YC signals representing a still image or a dynamic image according to a predetermined compression format and for expanding the compressed data when it is read from the

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memory. The compressing and expanding circuit includes a frame memory for signal processing and the like. YC signals from the image processing system 20 are stored on a frame basis, the signals are read on a plurality of block basis, and the signals are compression encoded. The compression encoding is carried out by, for example, two-dimensional orthogonal transformation, normalization, and encoding according to Huffman method on the block basis.

The reproduction processing circuit 310 is a circuit for carrying out matrix conversion of the luminance signal Y and the chrominance signals R-Y and B-Y into, for example, RGB signals. Signals converted by the reproduction processing circuit 310 are outputted to the liquid crystal monitor 4. Thus, a visible image is displayed and reproduced.

On the other hand, the control system 40 includes control circuits for controlling, in response to external operation, the image pickup system 10, the image processing system 20, and the recording and reproduction system 30, respectively. It detects depression of the RELEASE button 6 to control driving of the solid-state image pickup element 120, operation of the RGB image processing circuit 210, compression processing of the recording processing circuit 300, and the like. More specifically, the control system 40 includes an operation detection circuit 410 for

detecting the operation of the RELEASE button 6, a system control unit 400 for controlling the respective portions in response to the detection signal and generating and outputting timing signals when an image is picked up and the like, and a drive circuit 420 for the solid-state image pickup element 120, which, under control of the system control unit 400, generates drive signals for driving the solid-state image pickup element 120.

Next, operation of the image pickup apparatus according to the present embodiment is described with reference to Figs. 14 and 17A to 17C. First, when the main switch 5 is turned on, power source voltage is supplied to the respective portions and then they become operable. Then, it is determined whether an image signal can be recorded or not in the memory. Here, the number of recordable pictures is displayed on the display area 13 for the remaining number of pictures in a liquid crystal monitor 4 according to the remaining capacity. An operator sees the display and, if a picture is recordable, directs the camera to the field and presses down the RELEASE button 6.

When the RELEASE button 6 is halfway pressed down, the exposure time is calculated. When all the preparatory processing for taking a picture completes, the camera is in a recordable state, and the operator is informed of this through the display. When the

RELEASE button 6 is fully pressed down, the operation detection circuit 410 transmits the detection signal to the system control unit 400. Here, the exposure time calculated in advance is counted. When the

5 predetermined exposure time elapses, a timing signal is supplied to the drive circuit 420. Then, the drive circuit 420 generates horizontal and vertical drive signals to sequentially read each of the exposed 1600×800 pixels in the horizontal direction and in the

10 vertical direction.

The read signals of respective pixels are converted by the A/D converter 500 into digital signals of a predetermined number of bits to be sequentially supplied to the RGB image processing circuit 210 of the

15 image processing system 20. The RGB image processing circuit 210 carries out interpolation to quadruple the pixel resolution after white balance adjustment and gamma control, and supplies the signals to the YC processing circuit 230.

20 In the YC processing circuit 230, the high luminance signal generating circuit generates high luminance signal YH with regard to the respective RGB pixels, and similarly, the low luminance signal generating circuit generates low luminance signal YL.

25 The calculated high luminance signal YH is outputted to an adder through a low-pass filter. In the same way, the low luminance signal YL is, after subtraction of

5
10

15

20

25

As described in the above, according to the above

embodiment, the following technological advantages can be obtained.

(1) An image pickup apparatus which is provided with an objective lens having a simple structure and yet has high image quality with satisfactory correction of chromatic aberration, can be materialized.

(2) By using only one objective lens, a quite thin image pickup apparatus can be materialized, which makes it possible to thin a digital color camera into a card type.

(3) A quite advantageous image pickup optical system can be materialized from the viewpoint of the cost compared with an image pickup optical system which corrects color aberration by utilizing a combination of a plurality of lenses.

(4) By forming object images with regard to each of the wavelength ranges, pixels provided with the same kind of optical filters can be densely arranged, and, an image pickup system can be materialized which does not require an optical low-pass filter for removing aliasing.

The individual components shown in schematic or block form in the drawings are all well-known in the camera arts and their specific construction and operation are not critical to the operation or best mode for carrying out the invention.

While the present invention has been described

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with respect to what is presently considered to be the preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments. To the contrary, the invention is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims. The scope of the following claims is to be accorded the broadest interpretation so as to encompass all such modifications and equivalent structures and functions.

For example, in the described embodiment, optical filters used for the color separation are primary color filters of red, green, and blue. However, the present invention is also applicable to a case where these filters are replaced by complementary color filters of cyan, magenta, and yellow.

Further, in the above embodiments, an object image having the highest luminosity factor (green) is used as a reference to describe change in the intervals between the object image having the highest luminosity factor and object images having other luminosity factors (other colors), which is caused by change in the distance to the object. However, the present invention is also applicable to a case where an object image having the highest luminosity factor (green) is not used as the reference.

Also, in the present invention, the whole or part

of the appended claims or of the structure of an embodiment may form one apparatus, may be combined with another apparatus, or may be a constituent of an apparatus.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image pickup apparatus comprising:
first and second image pickup portions for
receiving at least a first wavelength component of
5 object light and a second wavelength component of the
object light different from said first wavelength
component, respectively; and
first and second optical systems for guiding said
first and second wavelength components of the object
10 light to be received by said first and second image
pickup portions to said first and second image pickup
portions, respectively, via different optical paths,
said first and second optical systems being constructed
such that focal length of said first optical system
15 with regard to said first wavelength component is equal
to the focal length of said second optical system with
regard to said second wavelength component.
2. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1,
20 wherein said first wavelength component is a
representative wavelength of light of a first spectral
distribution and said second wavelength component is a
representative wavelength of light of a second spectral
distribution which is different from said first
25 spectral distribution.

3. An image pickup apparatus according to claim

2, wherein said first spectral distribution is a spectral distribution including peak wavelength of a luminosity factor.

5 4. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first wavelength component is included in a spectral distribution including peak wavelength of a luminosity factor.

10 5. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first and second wavelength components are two different color components among red, green, and blue.

15 6. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second optical systems comprises a filter for extracting said first and second wavelength components.

20 7. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second optical systems comprises a single lens.

25 8. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said single lenses of said first and second optical systems are integrally formed of a glass material or a resin material.

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9. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

a light shielding layer provided between said integrally formed single lenses.

5

10. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second optical systems comprises a single lens provided with an infrared radiation cutting filter.

10

11. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second optical systems comprises photochromic glass.

15

12. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first and second optical systems comprises filters for extracting said first wavelength component and said second wavelength component, respectively.

20

13. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second optical systems comprises a color purity correction filter.

25

14. An image pickup apparatus according to claim 1, wherein each of said first and second optical systems comprises a filter whose transmission factor

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becomes smaller as the distance from the optical axis thereof becomes longer.

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15. An image pickup apparatus according to claim
5 1, wherein, when a virtual object distance D [m] is
defined as a function of an image pickup angle θ [°] of
said first or second optical systems to be $D = 1.4 /$
 $\tan (\theta/2)$, an interval between optical axes of said
first and second optical systems is set such that
10 change in an interval between an object image of said
first wavelength component received by said first image
pickup portion and an object image of said second
wavelength component received by said second image
pickup portion between when an object exists at said
15 virtual distance and when the object exists at infinity
is smaller than a pixel pitch of said image pickup
portions multiplied by two.

16. An image pickup apparatus according to claim
20 1, wherein said first and second image pickup portions
are integrally formed.

17. An image pickup apparatus according to claim
1, wherein said first and second image pickup portions
25 are formed in a plane shape.

18. An image pickup apparatus according to claim

1, further comprising:

a plurality of openings for taking in external light through said first and second optical systems.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An image pickup apparatus comprising first and second image pickup portions for receiving at least a first wavelength component of object light and a second wavelength component of the object light different from the first wavelength component, respectively, and first and second optical systems for guiding the first and second wavelength components of the object light to be received by the first and second image pickup portions to the first and second image pickup portions, respectively, via different optical paths, the first and second optical systems being constructed such that focal length of said first optical system with regard to the first wavelength component is equal to the focal length of the second optical system with regard to the second wavelength component.

FIG. 2

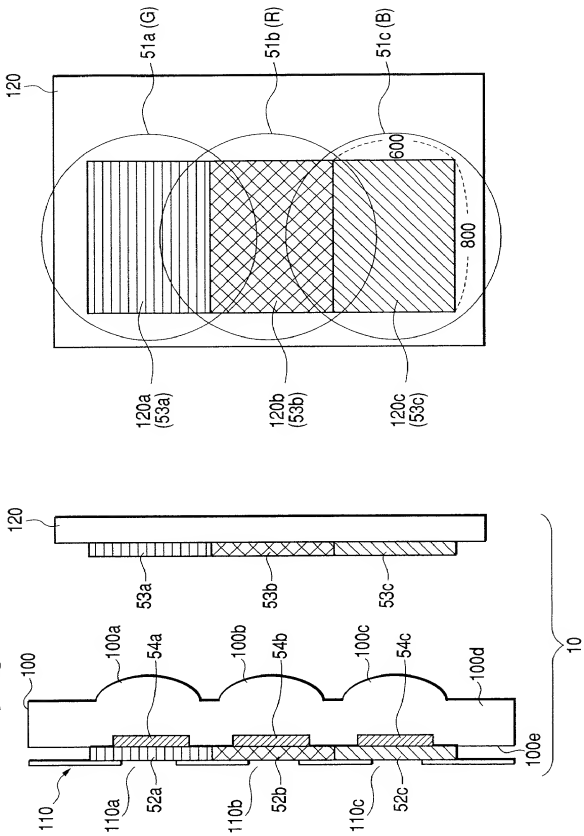


FIG. 3

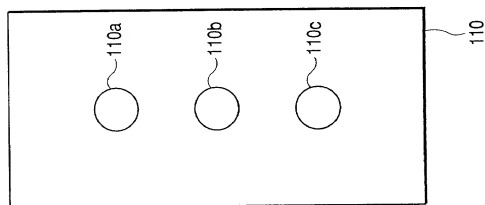


FIG. 4

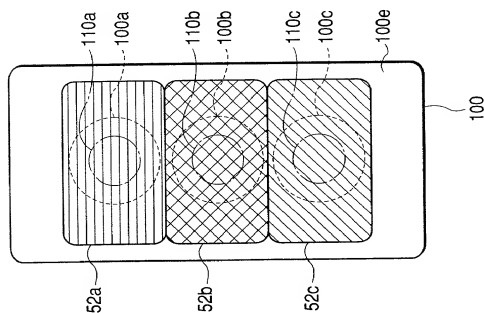


FIG. 5

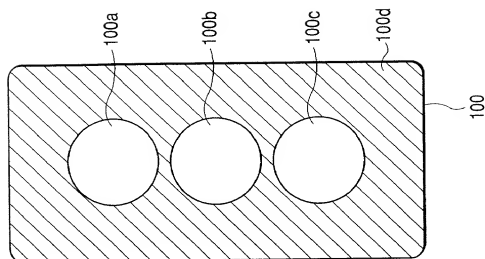


FIG. 6

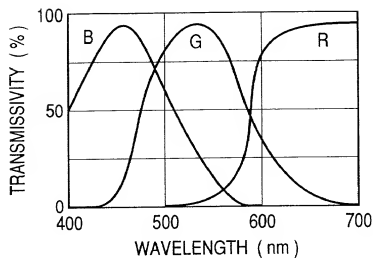


FIG. 7

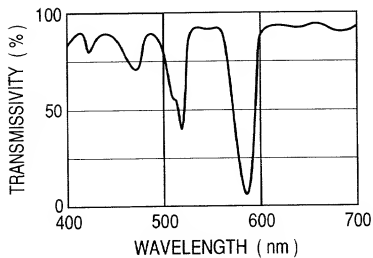


FIG. 8

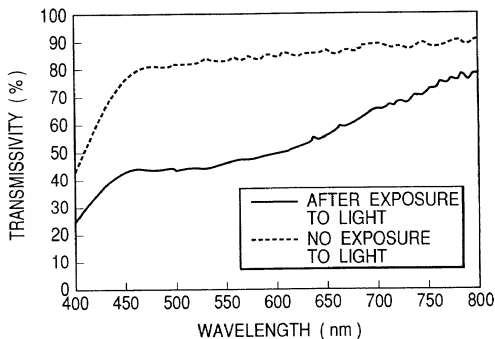


FIG. 9

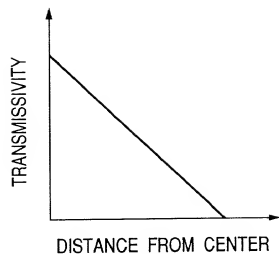


FIG. 10

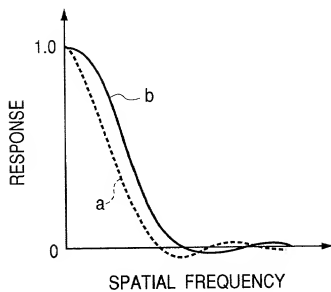


FIG. 11

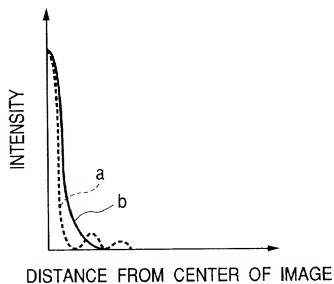


FIG. 12

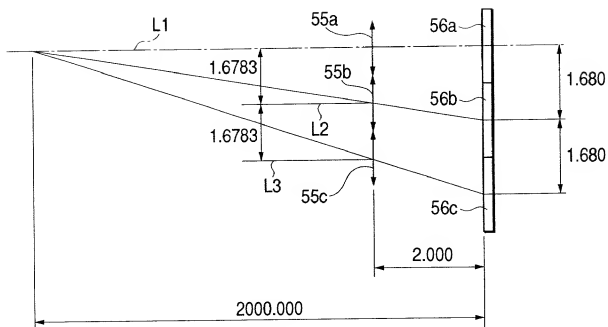


FIG. 13

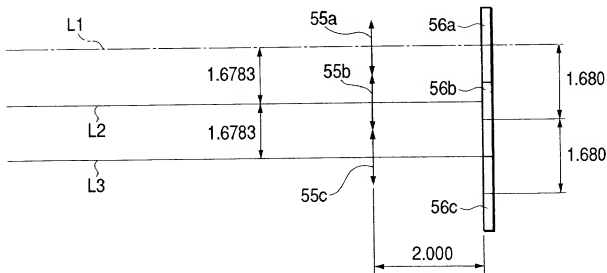


FIG. 14

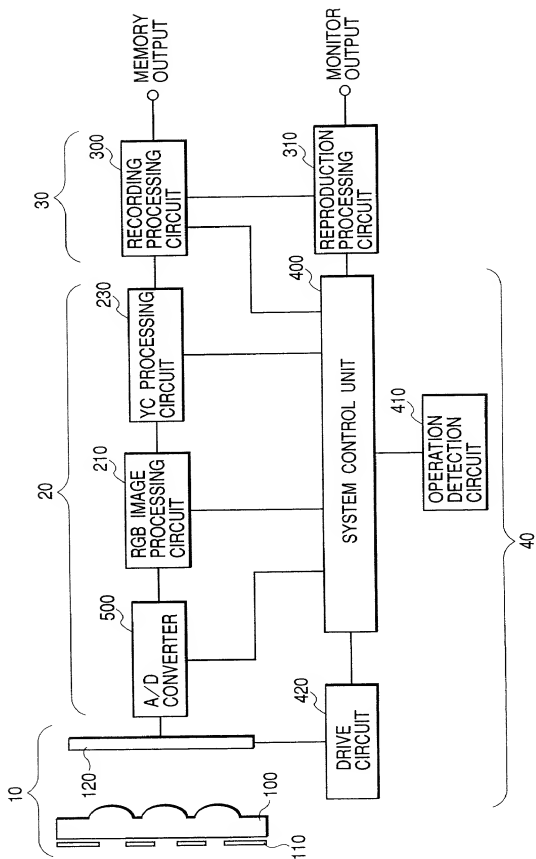


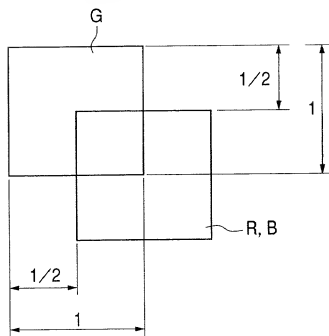
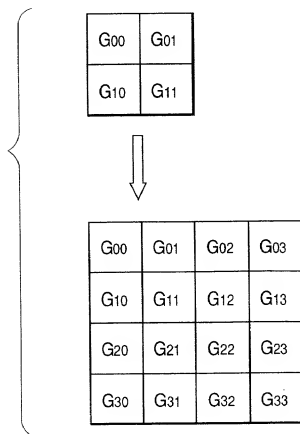
FIG. 15**FIG. 16**

FIG. 17A

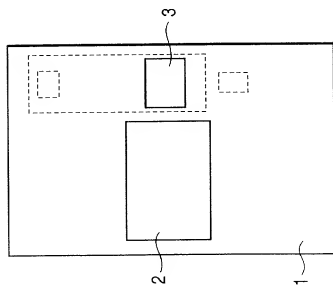


FIG. 17B

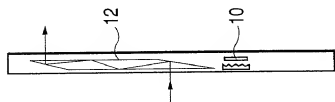
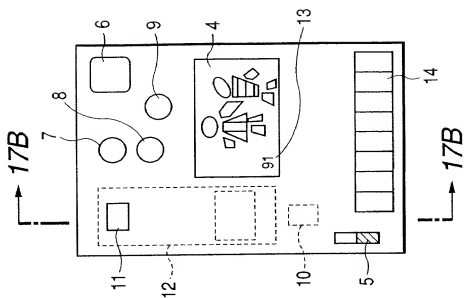


FIG. 17C



COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR PATENT APPLICATION
(Page 1)

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled IMAGE PICKUP APPARATUS

the specification of which ☒ is attached hereto ☐ was filed on _____ as United States Application No. or PCT International Application No. _____ (if applicable). and was amended on _____

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR §1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) or §365(b), of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or §365(a) of any PCT international application which designates at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Country	Application No.	Filed (Day/Mo./Yr.)	Priority Claimed (Yes/No)
Japan	11-185663	30 June 1999	Yes

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s), or § 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT international application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

Application No.	Filed (Day/Mo./Yr.)	Status (Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
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I hereby appoint the practitioners associated with the firm and Customer Number provided below to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith, and direct that all correspondence be addressed to the address associated with that Customer Number:

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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